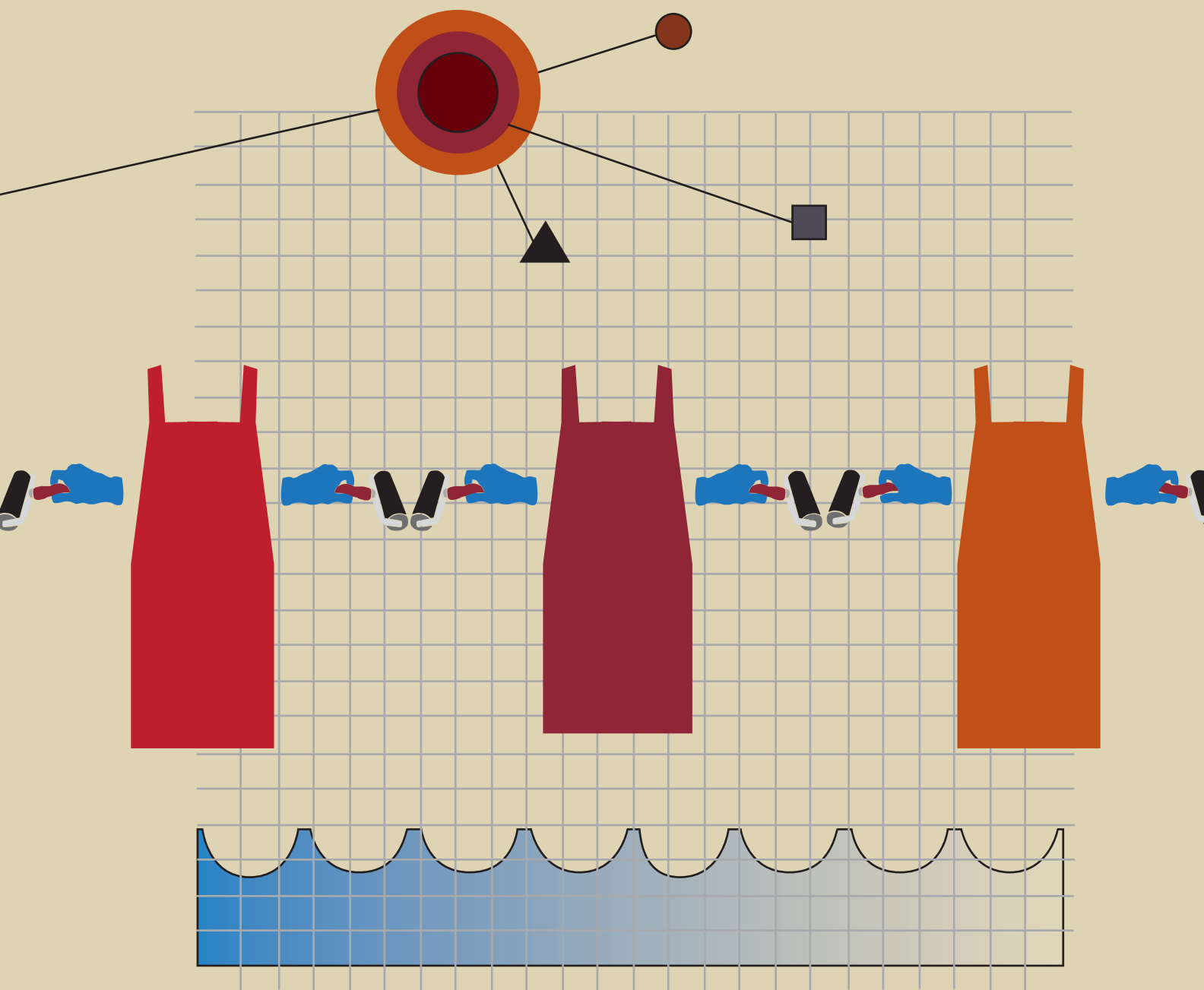




THE CALIFORNIA PRINTMAKER

THE JOURNAL OF THE CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF PRINTMAKERS 2016



C o l l a b o r a t i o n

President's Statement

It's with great enthusiasm that we welcome this year's Journal of the California Society of Printmakers: *Collaboration*. Printmakers frequently work in communal workspaces, where teamwork becomes an integral part of studio practice. The printmaker's process comes to life in environments that are conducive to the collaborative exchange of ideas. In the various articles in this journal we see how artists collaborate within communities, teams, group activities, and as duos to foster cross-pollination, innovation, and experimentation. As Robynn Smith states in her article "letting go of the ego in favor of a shared experience, can open vast floodgates to creativity while embracing the unknown".

The 2015 Artist in Residency program was quite successful with its range of talented and inspiring printmakers. Applications are now being accepted for the 2016 cohort, and we encourage you to apply for the unique opportunity to collaborate with Bay Area Master Printers.

This year we scheduled several Artist's talks and we plan to continue with three to four talks per year.

2015/2016 Talks

Claudia Bernardi: *Words of Sand*, CCA, October 1, 2015

Macy Chadwick: Book Art Talk: *Turning (Prints into) Pages*, SFCB, February 5, 2016

Karen Kunc: *Contemporary Printmaking*, CCA, May 15, 2016

Jonathan Barcan's commissioned print: *Living Mode #6* is available through our website and at our venues.

I would like to express my gratitude to our board members for their commitment and dedication to our organization. Also, a congratulations and welcome to our new members.

Wishing you all the best,

Luz Marina Ruiz
CSP President



© 2016 California Society of Printmakers

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except by reviewers or educators who may quote brief passages. All articles and artwork remain the property of the artists.

Published by
California Society of Printmakers
P.O. Box 194202
San Francisco, CA 94119-4202
www.caprintmakers.org
Cover design by Susan Howe

C o l l a b o r a t i o n

Table of Contents

Sphere Project: A Collaboration on a Grand Scale	5
Book Bombs: Narrative Prints in Public Space	9
Al-Matunabbi Street Starts Here!	13
Save The Oceans	19
Navigating Liminal Terrain	23
When Printmaking Collaborates	27
Combining Methods: Bob Rocco & Signblast Tape Stencil Relief Printing Journal Technical Article	28
Close Encounters of the Collaborative Kind	31

Introduction

Focus 2016: Collaboration, Our Dilemma and Our Delight

Our Journal Team chose “collaboration” for this year’s CSP Journal focus. Seemed simple enough—printmakers often work together to accomplish various goals and many of those projects are noteworthy and educational.

We sent out invitations to various printmakers whom we felt might like to write about collaborative projects in which they were key players. We started receiving their first drafts and were surprised at how the word collaboration was interpreted. Additionally we came to realize that we, the Journal team, had differing ideas about the definition of our focus word, and that some of the articles might not actually be about collaboration... thus you see our dilemma.

After considerable discussion we decided to divide the Journal articles into two general categories, Team—a collaborative art practice, and Process—a collaboration with mixed media. The following is an effort to satisfy all parties and to be as inclusive as possible—moving towards delight.

A *collaborative art practice* includes a team of people producing an art piece(s). The project engages two or more people (artists) working together to develop a

conceptual idea and further a theme aimed towards a specific goal; to produce a tangible, original artwork that clearly shows the input of the entire team.

A *mixed media collaboration* includes a broader definition of collaboration where processes or techniques used in printmaking come together to become something new, where one media may lose its individuality and uniqueness when in partnership with the other. The artworks and even the way they might be shown conceptually could extend the definition of collaboration to become more inclusive.

Last, but not least, we have added a new category this year. Technical, a “how-to” article. We had several requests for this inclusion and we hope to repeat this category yearly. If you have something new that might be of interest for next year please contact us.

I’m delighted by our authors projects and articles. They are exciting and ground breaking. I hope you enjoy them all. I also want to give special thanks to the Journal Team, which includes Ginger Tolonen, copy editor; Annie Pike, layout editor; and Sharon King.

Susan Howe
Journal Director



Sphere Project : A Collaboration on a Grand Scale

By Frol Boundin and Mary Robinson

As instructors of printmaking, we are by nature creatures of collaborative environments. Printmakers are frequently driven by a fascination with the complexity of a process—with what can be accomplished as an end result; additionally, many collaborate as artistic teams, to produce an art project with a specific direction and conceptual theme they have agreed upon. On a daily basis, we are faced with the challenge of creating an efficient space, where students and professors work in unison, where ideas flow freely, and where collaboration often equals excitement for highly complex processes. I myself often find the dynamics of a busy print shop the necessary catalyst for the creation of complex works—born out of continuous discussions of concepts and techniques with peers and students.

In the spring of 2014, at the Southern Graphics Council International in San Francisco, University of Tennessee Printmaking Professor Beauvais Lyons suggested that I submit a proposal to conduct a demonstration at the 2015 SGCI at the University of Tennessee. I believe his exact words were, “We have an American French Tool press that will print 60" x 120", would you be interested in doing something with it?” Beauvais had seen my large format mixed media monotypes a few years earlier, and thought that I could make some really big prints. Intaglio has always been at the base of my creative process and for the past decade I’ve been exploring the relationships between traditional and contemporary techniques while pushing the boundaries of scale and form necessitating application of industrial and digital methods. So, when presented the opportunity to use a piece of equipment few of us ever get to work on, I jumped at the chance. As I prepared my proposal for a large-scale monoprint workshop, two things became clear: one, in order to make the project work I would need a full day rather than a two-hour time slot; and two, in order to address the *Sphere* theme of the conference, I would need this to be a collaborative effort. In short, I needed a team of printmakers representing the breadth of knowledge found in our national print community.

Collaboration is a term that is often misunderstood. Too often, an intended collaborative effort between accomplished individuals ends in a clash of egos, removing any potential dialogue and expansion from the work. And sometimes what is called collaboration is really more of an “I create and you print” relationship. Instead, I wanted this project to be a true team effort, where participating artists could express themselves freely, sharing formal structure while at the same time showcasing personal techniques and methods. I was also interested in learning new methods that people from different backgrounds would bring, while allowing audience members to engage with us as we worked. For this event to be successful, I needed a great crew. I had participated in a few projects of this type before, most notably at the *Print, Printed, Printing*, mini-conference hosted by New Mexico Highlands University. So my first choice was to bring in my University of New Mexico colleagues Tim Van Ginkel and Kristin Calhoun. I was familiar

Aaron Ishaeik, Kristin Calhoun and
Mary Robinson preparing individual
plates for assembly Anna Velicky



The completed matrix on the large press bed

Frol Boundin

with their mixed media approaches and I knew that they would be able to work together and bring a very unique vision and energy to the project. At Tim's suggestion, we invited William Howard of Western Illinois University, who has developed a number of innovative monotype techniques using Compound 747. We also invited my soon-to-be colleague Mary Robinson of the University of South Carolina, whose aesthetic and methods born out of collagraph and relief techniques resonated deeply with me. Lastly, I needed a complete outsider for the unpredictability factor. I knew that in the world of graphic design, collaboration is common, so I turned to Aaron Ishaeik, a fellow SAIC graduate and a renowned art director from San Diego. While not a professional printmaker, he has been making experimental etchings in his home studio for the past 12 years and would bring a unique methodology to plate making. At this point, I knew that we had a good range of aesthetics and techniques. From organic to mechanical and architectural, from representational to abstract, from photomechanical to traditional intaglio methods, this was an eclectic group of individuals that could work together as a team and conduct a successful day-long workshop.

Upon acceptance of our proposal, the first challenge was to design an intaglio matrix that was big enough to utilize the large press fully, yet modular, so that several components could be developed by individual artists at their own pace and location, allowing artists to explore individual monoprint techniques with their plates prior to the conference. In keeping with the *Sphere* theme and the size of the maximum paper that we could use, 60" wide Lenox 100, we wanted to create something that could be interpreted as a 'celestial plane,' where some of the components would read as planets or individual worlds representing each one of us. Together the components would create a coherent abstract form suggestive of a printmaking community and reminiscent of the solar system. We also had to understand how to print this puzzle, and how it could represent collaboration by different arrangements of the elements. After a series of conversations and passing several geometric designs back and forth, we decided that each artist would etch two 14" and two 10" circles.

Some of the smaller elements connecting circles were also etched, while some were not and where left blank. In total we made 42 shaped matrices, and at the workshop each artist would coordinate printing an individual image comprised of 32 components. Some artists also made individual stencils or additional matrices that could be used to embellish the overall design. The plates would be intaglio wiped and relief rolled, or simply used as substrates for the monotype techniques that each printmaker wanted to showcase. None of us had ever made prints of this scale or complexity, and there were many technical issues to resolve.

The first in a series of technical challenges was the material and precision in the shaping of the individual components. Everything had to fit seamlessly, but we had a very limited budget. That meant that neither zinc nor copper, the most traditional etching metals, could be used. Instead, we would use cold rolled steel. While cheap and readily available in any size, steel is hard to cut, etch, and rework. Luckily, some of us had been experimenting with using copper sulfite for etching cold metals as well as using ImageOn film to get our designs on the plates quickly. Since no one could cut all of the matrices by hand with enough precision, I engaged a local metals shop to use their water-jet CNC machine. I built our matrix design in Adobe Illustrator, and then translated it into a CAD drawing for the machine to read. The metal and all the work came to just under \$300. Now we had to test the overall puzzle. Would it stay together in the press? How would we get the paper on the bed without anything shifting? Were we attempting the impossible? Luckily for us, Professor Sydney Cross of nearby Clemson University let us use their large custom-built press to pull a blind proof of the entire puzzle. The matrix and paper ran through the press flawlessly. We were in the game!



Tim Van Ginkel and Frol Boundin—fine tuning Pamela Winegard



Tim Van Ginkel and Margot Meyers assembling the matrix A. Velicky

By the end of November 2014, all of the plates had gone out to the individual artists for etching. At this point, Mary and I were working together at USC and this gave us a chance to create works that were a symbiosis of our individual aesthetics and print styles. Using relief, intaglio, serigraphy, and digital printing, we created a 24-foot long print. We learned that collaboration is about leaving your ‘driver’ tendencies at the door of the shop, and maintaining a continuous dialogue about form and concept, so that the sum of all parts could make a cohesive whole. We also began forming a group of student assistants that would prove invaluable at the conference. By the end of February, the artists returned the etched plates to us, allowing us to test all the plates and experiment with various inking techniques. We spent countless hours in the studio with our team of students trying different arrangements and combinations, working in smaller sections of our total matrix on our trusty Brand. With each passing day, our confidence grew and our students became more involved, not only in press assistance, but in making decisions and discoveries of all the possibilities printmaking has to offer.

Finally, the big day arrived in Tennessee. At first the huge press, nicknamed *Betsy*, was intimidating. But as our group assembled with their corresponding teams of graduate and undergraduate assistants, we regained our confidence. On the day of the workshop we gathered at 8 A.M., set up our workspace and planned our flow of execution. There were over 10 split fountain slabs of various sizes and hues, dozens of metal plates, hundreds of styrene or PTSG plates, 6 intaglio wiping stations, and an incredible ballet of over a dozen printmakers working in unison. As we pulled our first run of the day, the electricity in the studio was palpable. Unlike originally planned, where each artist was to be in charge of an individual print, we started making decisions together as we printed, really working as a team where each individual would act more as a guide to the process rather than a dictator. The prints at first were complex with vibrant colors, and then became simpler, more muted



Frol Boundin and Ane Weisith Orcutt in the studio post workshop examining the final prints

Adam Orcutt

and controlled. Each artist would focus on one aspect of the technique, and then others would respond in turn. It became a game of give and take where communication and forming ideas right on the press bed became the main driving force. Our friend Margot Meyers of Bellingham, WA who knew about the project, came and brought plates that she had made on her own, adding them into the rotation. Finally, the audience members joined in and started inking and composing with some of the matrices and stencils. Every member of the group was able to share tips and tricks that they brought to the project and some of the audience members stayed the full six hours of the workshop. By the evening Gala we could hardly stand, but the energy and exchange was unlike anything that we had experienced. It was a complete and true collaboration.

The resulting six prints are quite possibly some of the most complex images I have ever seen. With each passing day, as I watch them on the walls of my studio, I make new discoveries. The individual components are indeed personal worlds that speak of fascinations, memories, experiences, and yet together they form a universe that tells a story of a year in our lives when six printmakers dreamed, worked, and learned together.

Participants

Frol Boundin, University of South Carolina, Adjunct Professor
 Tim Van Ginkel, University of New Mexico, Assistant Professor
 Mary Robinson, University of South Carolina, Associate Professor
 William Howard, Western Illinois University, Professor
 Kristin Calhoun, University of New Mexico, Graduate Student
 Aaron Ishaeik, MJE San Diego, Senior Art Director

Book Bombs: Narrative Prints in Public Space

By Mary Tasillo and Michelle Wilson



Strive

Michelle Wilson



Mary Tasillo & Michelle Wilson at Welcome House

M. Wilson

Book Bombs consists of the two-person team of printmakers Mary Tasillo and Michelle Wilson. As a collaboration, Book Bombs re-contextualizes public spaces, particularly park benches, empty lots, street sign posts, telephone poles, and abandoned buildings, drawing on the history of street art and the artist multiple. Our site-based interventions highlight the social and environmental issues of a location, such as homelessness and endangered and invasive plants ecologies through prints, paper, and zines.

The two artists first met as fellow students in the Book Art and Printmaking MFA program at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Book Bombs began with a spring 2009 social media exchange. Michelle posted a link to an article about yarn bombing—the act of installing crocheted or knitted designs in public spaces such as trees, parking meters, street signs, and so on. As a book artist, Michelle jokingly posed the question, “What would it mean to book bomb?” Mary took her seriously and their collaboration began.

The first conversation covered topics from the act of reading in public, to control and ownership of public spaces, to public parks and who occupies them. One focus during the initial conversation became the bar that is installed on park benches to prevent a homeless person from sleeping comfortably—euphemistically called the ‘arm rest.’ Park benches and their armrests, Michelle proposed, were sites for interventions. With this, their first project took shape.

Book Bombs was born as a series of print and zine drops in public park spaces in Philadelphia, scheduled to coincide with the *Philagrafika 2010* international printmaking festival, which took place in January through early April of 2010. Assuming an air of legitimacy, we signed ourselves up as in Independent Project, joining many galleries, museums, and other established institutions, procured some grant funding, and proceeded to cut down invasive plant species from empty urban lots for papermaking, scavenge wood scraps for block carving, finagle print shop access, and tie and paste prints to walls, park benches, fences, gates, and lampposts around Philadelphia.

The project was about printmaking, papermaking, and public space, but it was also about community and collaboration. Book Bombs began with the idea that we were making art for the public realm and we had to trust that people would see and appreciate the prints for their brief lifespan. To say that we shared ideas with one another is an understatement, and as the project gained momentum, we tied into a network of creative, technical, and ideological support in Philadelphia and beyond.

This was exemplified by our project for *The Welcome House*, an opportunity that arose in fall 2009 as we were preparing for *Philagrafika*. As is the case with many projects that use social media as part of their evolution, we were generating energy before our project officially launched.

Mary Tasillo assists participant in hanging his paper on the wall of the Welcome House, October 2009

M. Wilson





Rooted Within, installed in Louis Kahn Park, April 2010 M.Wilson

The Welcome House was a project conceived and curated by Marianne Bernstein. The structure was a 10' x 10' x 10' clear cube that was installed in Philadelphia's Love Park for ten days as part of Design Philadelphia. A different artist or artist team was given the cube as a one-day residency, opening up an artist's traditionally private studio sphere into an interactive and communal event.

Book Bombs turned our day in the structure into a collaboration with the public, inviting the population of Love Park, which included office workers, skateboarders, protesters, passers-by, and the homeless, to make pulp prints about the park, urban space, and Love Park in particular. Pulp prints are a hybrid papermaking-printmaking technique. In this process, paper pulp is beaten to an extremely fine consistency, so much that it will not have integrity as paper. This pulp is then squeezed through screen print mesh stencils onto a freshly pulled, wet sheet of handmade paper. Due to the nature of printing with pigmented paper pulp instead of ink, imagery can be layered immediately without the need for drying between layers. Our stencils were prepared and exposed prior to the event, using imagery and text that related to the park, including themes of home and security. The resulting papers were attached while still wet to the interior of the Welcome House, imagery facing out to the public, creating an evolving visual conversation throughout the day. That evening, as the sun was setting, we had to shut down, turning away the line of people who were waiting to make a print and contribute to the wall of the Welcome House.

Our day at the Welcome House became a major influence on how we developed our project. It taught us the power of making prints when engaging the public, but most of all; it opened our eyes to the multiple narratives transpiring simultaneously around us. Book Bombs began with a focus on place—we were taking

ownership of the city we lived in, declaring its streets our art gallery, free of restrictions. *The Welcome House* clarified that our content was more than just our story; it belonged to our community and our city.

Philadelphia is a postindustrial city with a large and visible homeless population, as well as a wealthy population that lives in the city's center and it seemed natural, when designing a project for public park spaces, to address the tension between two uses of city parks, as a haven for those without property and as a leisure space for those with a home. Our first print, *Where Is Home?* functions as a diptych, calling out the difference between sleeping on a park bench and having a roof over one's head. The imagery was printed from hand-carved woodblocks and antique wood type. The handmade paper was made from worn linen and cotton clothing, thinking of the way clothing becomes primary shelter for those sleeping on the park benches. The prints were distributed on the first Friday of January, to coincide with First Friday gallery openings, when we became closer to our subject in unintended ways as the January temperatures numbed our fingers and chilled us to the bone while we spent several hours traveling the city and tying the knots that would secure our prints to a fence, bench or post.

Themes evolved print by print. The second print in the series, *Tenacity*, was a two-color woodblock with wood type, printed on paper made from the invasive species Paulownia (*Paulownia tomentosa*). This plant grows rampant in vacant lots around Philadelphia, and is also known locally as North Philly Palm or even more colloquially as 'ghettoweed.' It was important to us to use a plant that was, for all its non-nativeness of the city, clearing the sidewalk up the street from Michelle's studio as we harvested.

The prints became nominally about the plants, while characterizing the city's inhabitants and envisioning transformation at a time of a depressed economy in a gritty city. Our second print bombing took place in early February, in the lead up to a blizzard. The first flakes started to fall early in the evening and by the time we finished our round of parks and back alley fences, we were becoming rapidly snow covered. The *Paulownia* paper proved equal to the occasion, weathering two blizzards over the month of February. Most prints survived that first storm, and some were still hanging when we came back a month later to hang *Strive*.

Strive, our third print for *Philagrafika 2010*, was another woodcut, with both wood and metal type, printed on mugwort-abaca paper. Like the Paulownia fiber, the mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) was harvested from the North Philly neighborhood where Michelle's studio was located. In Chinese medicine, mugwort is said to induce



Tenacity

M. Wilson

vivid dreams. While printing in a frigid winter print shop where we had to warm the ink by a space heater before applying it to the rollers, that plant seed sleeping under the city's surface was a particularly powerful prayer for surmounting the winter of a city's discontent.

The culmination of our *Philagrafika* experience was the official Book Bomb, our first issue of Book Bombs the zine, called *Rooted Within*. In this zine, we brought together the narrative of our three previous prints. Printed in an edition of 500, they were pamphlet-sewn and gate-folded by hand, and then installed on park benches in the parks of our previous print bombings. The text and imagery of the zine was based on our prints and sketches, and ruminated on the visible and invisible layers that make up a city, and how the experience of living there transforms its inhabitants.

From the *Rooted Within*:

Rooted Within, these stories become the fibers of our being.
They hold us up, hold us back, and branch out
in ever increasing patterns.
They grow inside us, and inside the city itself.
From block to block, the city changes.
As I pass through it, it changes me.

It was park benches, particularly the 'arm rest,' that had ignited our original conversations about what it means to Book Bomb. *Rooted Within*, our book bomb, was installed on park bench arm rests throughout Philadelphia, bringing things full circle.

As stated previously, Book Bombs was originally conceived as a project for *Philagrafika 2010*. However, it became quickly apparent that we didn't want to limit ourselves to just that event, and Book Bombs became an ongoing collaboration, continuing our work intermittently and trans-continently since Michelle's move to the Bay Area. Since 2010, Book Bombs has completed projects in Baltimore, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Toronto, Madrid, and St. Louis. We continue to release zines both physically and digitally; some of our zines are available for free download on our site, bookbombs.net.

Book Bombs became a gift, a gift to the cities themselves, the experience of living in Philadelphia, the chance to visit others, a gift to passers-by, to those who read our words, touched our paper, sought our bombing locations. The giving became a gift to us, the chance to give to the unknown, to open us up to new encounters and possibilities, to set our prints and our zines out on travels. Some were undoubtedly lost to the trash, but some found homes where they are treasured. The chance to give made us grateful. Grateful to an appreciative, supportive community that offered us opportunities to share our art and ideas with others, and that shared facilities, supplies, enthusiasm and knowledge. Grateful to the experience itself, what it made us aware of, what it taught us, what it made us capable of, and how it changed us, day by day, month by month, and looking ahead, year by year.



Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here Project, Fine Arts Gallery, George Mason University School of Art, Fairfax, Virginia Nikki Brugnoli Whipkey

Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here!

By Cathy DeForest, PhD

Collaboration is a perfect fit for printmakers. As a beginning printmaker, nothing gave me greater pleasure than learning from fellow printmakers at Sherry Smith Bell's Blue Sky Studio in Lafayette, California. My greatest collaborative experience to date is working with the *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here! Coalition* begun in 2008.

Named after the famous classical Arab poet Abu at-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi (915-965 CE), al-Mutanabbi Street has been a thriving center of Baghdad's bookselling and publishing worlds for many years, a center for intellectual exchange. On March 5th, 2007, a car bomb exploded on al-Mutanabbi Street, killing 30, injuring 100. When the world did not notice this tragedy, Beau Beausoleil, a San Francisco poet and bookseller, formed a coalition of poets, artists, writers, printers, booksellers, and book lovers to create a response that is now in its ninth year.

Letterpress printer, Kathleen Walkup, facilitated the first call to letterpress printers to create broadsides marking the tragedy, which yielded 43 broadsides in 3 months. Following that, Beau worked with Sarah Bodman over the next two years and 130 broadsides were created, one for each person killed or wounded on that tragic day. Collaborating with a host of artists, librarians and museums, Beau organized 23 exhibits, starting in October of 2007 at the San Francisco Center for the Book, including five in Great Britain, two in Ireland, one in Canada and one in the Netherlands.

In the summer of 2012, a broadside exhibit of all 130 broadsides was held in Washington, D.C., organized by Casey Smith at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design. The Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, Anthony Shadid, connected Beau to Dr. Saad Eskander, the Director of the Iraq National Library. After some correspondence, Dr. Saad Eskander welcomed one complete set of the 130 broadsides into the permanent archive of the Iraq National Library. An exhibit of broadsides was held in Baghdad in April of 2013. library.fau.edu/depts/spc/jaffecenter/collection/al-mutanabbi/index.php

Beau continued his call for art—this time to book artists. Book artist Sarah Bodman joined the project in 2008 as Beau's co-coordinator for the broadside project and then as his co-coordinator on the artists' book project. She remains the UK coordinator for both projects. Two hundred sixty of us created artist books elevating the importance of books and the street so well known for its beacon of intellectual freedom. From 2012-2015, 24 exhibits of broadsides and artists' books expanded their reach into the Middle East at the American University in Cairo, Egypt and revisited sites in England, Canada and the Netherlands coordinated by Sarah Bodman of the University of West England.

CSP member, Felicia Rice, of Moving Parts Press states, “Collaboration is a call and response. The writers from the *Al-Mutanabbi Starts Here Project* have called out to me through their poems. I responded first with a broadside, *Destinies*; then, an artists’ book, *Five Hymns to Pain*; and most recently, a print, *Roots*. Once I had one of the poems in hand, I went to work interpreting it visually in word and image.”

[illegible]

Detroit to Baghdad: Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here Exhibition at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan



Felicia describes her process further, “When I asked Beau Beausoleil, to suggest a poem to work into my print for *Absence and Presence*, he sent me *Roots*, by Lamees Al-Ethari, an Iraqi poet largely in exile from her home. The poem speaks of Lamees’s painful loss and ties to her homeland, Iraq. In developing this relief print I interpreted the poem through the image, color and typography. The image is my drawing of barbed wire as roots, speaking to exile and war. The colors—yellow, khaki, mud brown, black—evoke the harsh desert, the brilliant sun, the dark earth and tangled roots. The multiple passes of the handset type obscure the language and challenge the viewer to decipher the message, to dig into the text and engage with the intensity of the poem. The intent is for the print to be gritty and dirty, to disturb.”

Dialog has been the driving motivation behind the presence of *Al-Mutannabbi Street Starts Here! Project* member, Bill Denham says it well. “Over the past eight years, through the production of over 600 works of art and through the more than 50 exhibitions and the more than 150 programs that have accompanied these exhibits, our purpose, those of us who have responded, has been to express solidarity with the Iraqi people and to take the lesson from the bombing of al-Mutanabbi Street to heart—the attack, born of cynicism and hatred and ignorance, was made not only on life and property but, more fundamentally, on ideas and on culture itself. This project enables artists to join hands with our Iraqi brothers and sisters, to join hands with all those with whom we have contact and to work always to forge new bonds between people, within and across cultures.”

Personally, I did not feel I could create my artist book, *Ink and Blood*, without getting to know some Iraqis. I traveled from my small rural town in Southern Oregon to San Francisco seeking Iraqi connections. I was introduced to Salam Talid, who graciously answered my questions, helped me download Arabic fonts and translated text for me. I know this tale could be told by many of the artists involved with the *Al-Mutanabbi Project*. Many project members collaborated with artists, writers, translators and librarians in order to create their works.

The use of social media has also promoted collaboration, where members and friends of the project connect through Facebook, YouTube postings, email newsletters and blogs.

Beau Beausoleil’s prolific emails to the coalition connect us to ongoing tragedies and triumphs in Iraq, the Middle East and North Africa. One of his emails inspired my print, *Our Immortal Soul*. Within twenty-four hours of the car bombing of the ancient bookseller street, ten poets stood in the rubble on top of buried body parts to deliver the *Manifesto of the Baghdad*



Al-Mutanabbi Street March 5, 2007, artist book, screenprint, by Art Hazelwood

Poets, written by Abdul-Zehra Zeki. I created solar plate intaglio etchings of the Arabic Manifesto and its sister English translation. To represent the rich culture defended by the Manifesto, I collaborated with John Sullivan of Logos Graphics to create relief and intaglio plates of ancient cuneiforms. To elevate the unfolding of the Manifesto with these ancient beginnings of written language, I made my print into an artist book, and encased it in a portfolio bound by Sabina Nies, my favorite fine bookbinder.

The greatest achievement of this work however came about in a circuitous route. In 2015 I encouraged Hampshire College in Western Massachusetts to host the *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here Project!*, where I participated in a panel discussion at the college, and met Claudia Lefko. Claudia had been working with Dr. Marzin Al-Jadiry, an oncologist in Baghdad since 2004. As a result of her connection, my book, *Our Immortal Soul*, was hand carried back to Baghdad to be delivered to the Manifesto poet, Abdul-Zehra Zeki. It took nine years for Abdul-Zehra to know that his words live on in the minds of those who see the coalition's printmaking exhibitions across three continents. Collaboration has wide circles.

My printmaking experience is a microcosm of this project. Hundreds of stories can be told of how poets, writers, printers, books artists, printmakers, film makers, booksellers and book lovers have woven their work together into a web of solidarity for the Iraqi people and the in defense of culture throughout the world.

Many present and past CSP members have contributed to the print project including Sherry Smith Bell, Art Hazelwood, Karen Kunc, Mary Laird, Katya McCulloch, Golbanou Moghaddos, Carrie Ann Plank, Felicia Rice and Kim Vanderheiden. Carrie Ann Plank inspired her students at the San Francisco Academy of Art from Saudi Arabia to contribute prints.

Art Hazelwood, long time activist and printmaking teacher, created an accordion screen printed artist book, *Al-Mutanabbi Street, March 5, 2007*, that depicts the joy of book lovers on the street and the carnage after the

bombing. His woodcut print, *Arise From the Flames*, is a compelling image of a man and woman holding a book. A flame arises behind them, reflecting the courage and grace of the Iraqi people despite all the suffering they have endured.

Art Hazelwood's contributions to the project, however, went beyond his artist book and print. As a US coordinator for *Absence and Presence*, he encouraged his students at the San Francisco Art Institute to contribute work, including those born in Iran and Turkey. Art also tapped long time activists to become involved in the project. Next, Art took the project into Katya McCulloch's printmaking class at San Quentin Prison. Their work with the men there, Jasper Alford, Khalifah Christensen, Dennis Crookes, Justus Asad Evans, Ronnie Goodman, Gary Harrell, Ray Ho, Frederick P. Tinsley, and Michael Williams, produced profoundly significant work. These men understand what it means to have their culture taken away and to live in a kind of war zone.

Beau is adamant with curators that this project is not an 'Art Exhibit' but a project of art in the service of ideas. He asks curators to step outside of their normal curatorial boundaries. Sometimes this leads to differences in how Beau and curators view collaboration. Beau does not want just a series of exhibits, isolated from the ideas of the project. In his words, "I'm not really comfortable with a phrase that has started to pop up in descriptions of exhibits about to open, as the work being part of a 'traveling exhibit.' To me each exhibit is unique and holds the possibility of reaching people in a way that we haven't yet. Traveling exhibit, sounds too much like a set piece, but each exhibit includes a different group of artists' books, broadsides, and now prints, so everything is made new again and again."

When an *Al-Mutanabbi project* member is involved in the curating of the project, collaboration of the finest kind is often the result. Two such exhibitions are debuted in 2016, one in Portland and one in Washington, D.C.

Bill Denham first became involved with the project when he letterpress printed the design and image CSP member Kim Vanderheiden created, *The Diameter of the*



Our Spirit Still Lives On, linocut by Ronnie Goodman



Mutanabbi St. Explosion 2007, linocut by Frederick Tinsley

Bomb. This piece is based on words by Yehuda Amichai and translated by Chana Bloch. Bill's involvement in the project is a model of collaboration. After moving to Portland from the San Francisco Bay Area, Bill hosted an event in Portland with Dr. Baher Butti, who moved to Portland from Iraq in 2009. Their first event in 2014 drew over 70 people, 35 of whom were Iraqi refugees. The evening was filled with English and Arabic readings, Iraqi music and art, and homemade Iraqi food. The highlight of the evening was the moving testimonies of each refugee.

Building on that success; the following year Bill and Dr. Butti hosted another event that drew a standing room only crowd, an estimated 60% of whom were Iraqi refugees now living in the Portland area.

The events of 2016 corresponds with the national printmaking Southern Graphics Conference in Portland. The exhibition of prints, broadsides and artists' books as well as multiple events begin March 5 and close May 15, 2016. To accomplish all this, Bill Denham and Dr. Butti built alliances with the Iraqi Student Club of Portland State University, the Iraqi Society of Oregon, the Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement, The Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University and the World Affairs Council of Oregon.

In Bill Denham's words, "Each broadside, artists' book, poem, essay or print that we witness in the exhibit defies the darkness of cynicism, ignorance and hatred that resulted in the bombing of al-Mutanabbi Street and gives us a platform to build upon for the future of our community, which has become more diverse with the influx of 1,500 Iraqi refugees. The more ways we can experience each other, the more ways we can hear each other's stories, the more we will come to see our common humanity—an essential ingredient in our shrinking world. So we will build on the work of Beau Beausoleil and the *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here! Coalition*, we will create replicable projects and events; lectures, slide shows, panel discussions, group conversations in the format of a 'World Café.' Our new focus is developing curricula for high school and college classes—that will continue the work of inclusion and community building for years to come."

Another outstanding model of collaboration was designed and coordinated by Helen Frederick in Washington, D.C. in 2016. Helen curated exhibitions and programs at twenty-five venues, including the George Mason University School of Art, the Corcoran School of Art & Design at The George Washington University, and the Smithsonian American Art/Portrait Gallery Library. Poets, translators, and critics gave readings, translation workshops, and talks, bringing the poetry of the Arab and Muslim worlds to D.C. area audiences. Artists, noted calligraphers, printmakers, and papermakers at George



Ink and Blood, artist book, intaglio and monoprints by Cathy DeForest

Mason University, gave hands-on workshops. A street festival was held for residents of Washington, D.C. in art making, poetry readings, music, food, and book exchanges, in celebration of the spirit of Baghdad's al-Mutanabbi Street.

In Helen Frederick's words, "As an artist, organizer, and professor at George Mason University's School of Art (SOA) I value the collaborative academic and professional community focused on advancing creativity through traditional and new media applied to varying social contexts. SOA is founded on the premise that art both reflects and inspires a creative society, improving the human condition while describing the world, both as it is and could be. I personally am immersed in this project to support freedom of expression through the arts, to help share and foster dialogue and positive ideas about the Middle East, and everywhere where the free exchange of ideas is threatened rather than embodied as a human right. This project will forge links with others across generations and locally, nationally and internationally, erase biases, and support voices that cannot be heard."

The power of collaboration and the collective voice is reflected again and again in the *Al-Mutanabbi Project*. It is our hope that the people of Iraq will feel seen and heard and that the world will value the beauty and depth of their culture.

My last words in my book, *Ink and Blood*, are:

Like the rivers that embrace Baghdad,
The flow of culture endures;
It is in our blood to have ink in our hands.

There will always be someone inspired to
communicate through words and images.
There will always be someone drawing
sustenance from art and knowledge.

The Republic
of the Imagination
cannot
be destroyed.

Contributors: Beau Beausoleil, Felicia Rice, Art Hazelwood,
Bill Denham, Kim Vanderheiden and Helen Frederick.

For a full list of exhibitions see:
al-mutanabbistreetstartshere-boston.com
sfc.org/exhibitionsabsence-and-presence

Contact Beau Beausoleil at overlandbooks@earthlink.net

To join the printmaking project, *Absence and Presence*,
contact Cathy DeForest at literarybridge@gmail.com.



Freedom in the Ocean, print by Tsvetelina Spiridonova

Save The Oceans

By Tsvetelina Spiridonova & Kamen Dragomirov

This story begins one summer vacation in 2009, when my family and I traveled around the coast of the Turkish Black Sea. The beaches at first glance were desolate of people, wild and beautiful. Once there, and to our horror, we were eye witnesses to dolphin suicides. It was a devastating shock when we saw the dolphins on the beach slapping and splashing their fins and tails, trying to get as far from the sea as possible and onto the dry coast.

My 6-year-old son saw all this agony and burst into tears! As we started to learn more about these suicides the truth was—the unusually warm waters and the extreme pollution in the sea is causing this terrible tragedy! On those wild beaches which no one cleans, we found enormous piles of garbage, 10 feet high, from all different parts of the world, brought there by the currents and rivers. This touched our hearts deeply and we promised right then, to start doing something, for the sake of our mother—planet earth, for the sake of future generations, and for our own two children.

We promised to find a way to express our belief with the most innocent and sincere way of communication, through a collaborative effort... the arts.

We believe being an artist today means more than any time before. It means to be a socially aware person who is sensible and involved with almost everything meaningful in life. It is the way and the goal of our existence.

To be a good artist today, we need to innovate artistically, and create a good message that is worthwhile and significant. We the artists, musicians, actors, poets, all of us, are very sensitive people. We feel the vibrations in the air that are directing us towards the importance of strong missions. Those missions can inspire and provoke positive change in humanity and world prosperity. Art can be a better, stronger, and a more universal tool of good will than any political platform.





Hope, print by Tsvetelina Spiridonova

As a result we were so inspired and wanted to find our role in this mission, myself as a printmaker who is always discovering and inventing new art experiments in the printmaking area and my husband, Kamen Dragomirov who is a photographer and sculptor. We started patiently collaborating on our 'sea world through our eyes' project.

It was extremely difficult for me as a mother of two children, to find dedicated time to work on my project. because it was so personal and so important, and with inspiration I managed to work day and night to create the work that represented our ocean creatures.

The concept of our project, *Save The Oceans*, included an exhibition of 50 artworks in a gallery as well as an open air installation. There were enlarged models of dolphins flying over the streets, between buildings and against the backdrop of the blue skies. The dolphins were messengers of the forgotten world, provoking thoughts and feelings of the meaning of life. Kamen created several 3D visualizations of *Save The Oceans*, in different places around the world. They can be seen at: linasimone.wix.com/art. The family of dolphins sculptures are made of organic straw and were installed so they could fly high above the street between the buildings in the center of Sofia, and in front of the gallery where I exhibited my artwork. Both inside the gallery and outside on the street we placed boards addressing different environmental problems and solutions; green ideas for implementation in everyday life. We had a dancing fiesta created by performances of tango and salsa. Our goal was to attract and to open the public's eyes and hearts to the problems humans cause to the environment and our future. Using the universal language of *art* we wanted to capture audience attention on an emotional level, and invite them to participate. We hoped the direct emotional and visual message of our art would provoke this pure instinctive response. We wanted people to realize that the environment is damaged and being destroyed not from some imaginary, horrible asteroid but by us... the people.

The image of flying fishes above our heads was surrealistic, but not compared to the very real danger of our unsustainable way of living. It was time to take responsibility for what we have done and what we continue to do every day. The mission of the project was to inform, inspire, and compel change. Our mission was to help every individual to understand the complex interconnections of things, including the bad effects we may have thousands of kilometers away, as a result of the things we buy right here at home. We must view our everyday decisions as consumers and ask ourselves why, and how much of something we buy, is really necessary. We were determined to provoke a new way of thinking, with a more sensitive and a more complete view of any issue involving our human, planetary footprint, any activity, technology, product or decision, essentially everything in our lives. We wanted to show the inevitable need to reform our current mindset concerning our values and goals as humans and our economic mindset to buy and throw away. We are determined to replace this mindset with a more sustainable and sensible purpose.

Today's iconic goal of existence, "the economic growth" is commonly measured by the growth of pure numbers. This goal is old-fashioned and unethical in the background of the environmental and social problems it causes for the future. We want to inspire a desire for change that will move towards a more sustainable and sophisticated society in pursuit of new opportunities for developing lives fulfilled with better values that give a real sense to our existence.

Today in 2016, the problem still exists; many people in the world do not realize that every minute is important for the big change in a new sustainable world. We must change our values, our measurements of success, and our goals. Our children must be educated to protect the planet in order to protect their own future.

There are many, many ways to distinguish our behavior towards nature and set an example if we choose to, a few examples follow:

Do not dispose of waste in streams and rivers for their paths lead to our oceans and seas.

Reduce the use of plastic bags in stores by wearing and carrying your fabric bag, revealing your sense of good taste and design.

People consume more than 1,200,000,000,000 (one trillion two hundred billion) plastic wraps and bags per year. Production of nylon, PVC, plastics, silicones and similar derivatives of oil pollute the air, water and land, inflicting irreparable damage to the ecosystem for hundreds of years.

Purchase a reusable water bottle and refill it at home or the nearest water fountain when you are out and about.

Please follow us on Facebook: "Save the Ocean Art Project" where you will find additional ideas to conserve our natural resources.

facebook.com/SAVE-THE-OCEANS-ART-PROJECT-140833322650446/

Web page

wix.com/linasimone/art

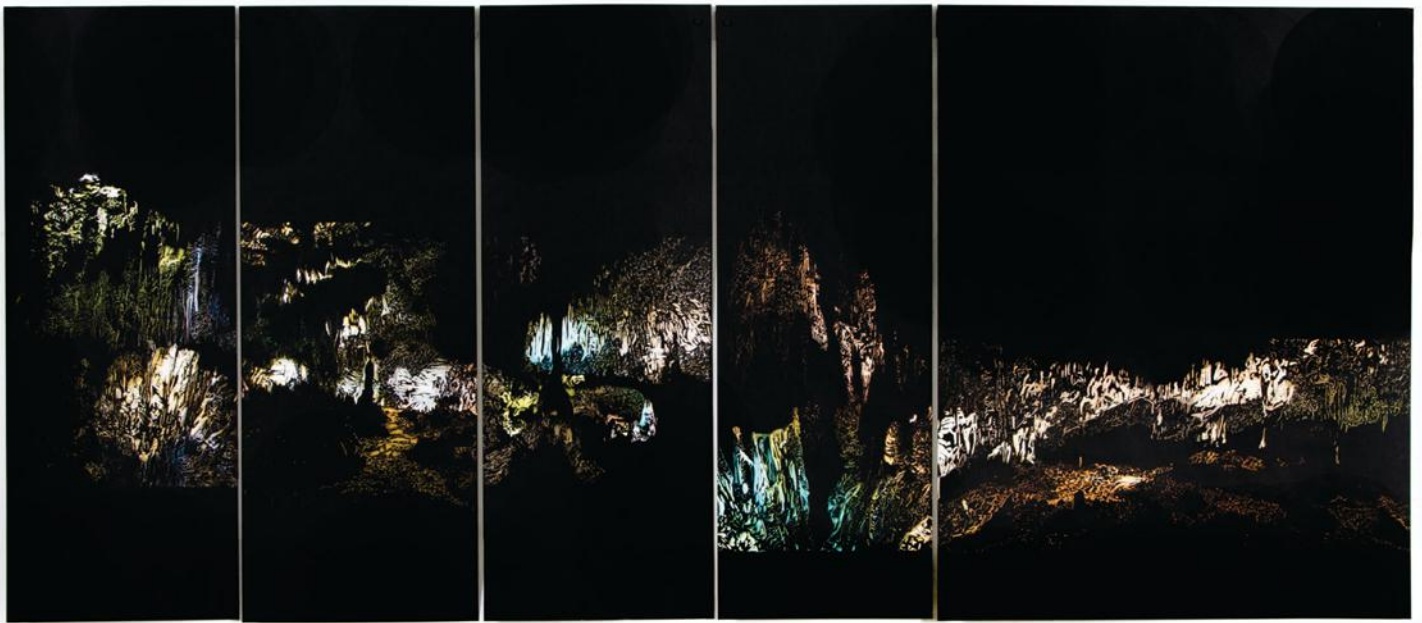
Email

linasimone.art@gmail.com

kamendragomirov@gmail.com



Tsvetelina dancing under the dolphins with
Orlin Oreshakov K. Dragomirov



Liminal Terrain

Navigating Liminal Terrain By Robynn Smith

Sketched out on a napkin on the floor of a deep cave in the middle of nowhere, *Liminal Terrain* became the most complicated print project of my career. The project involved the assistance and contributions of at least six people. Throughout the project, my goal was to make the piece appear as an apparition, all struggles invisible. My challenge was to gather, organize and navigate through enormously varied methods and materials, searching for the most direct routes, recognizing opportunities and embracing the unexpected.

In 1967 Bob Dylan collaborated with his band mates on some loose recordings. The resulting lyrics to 20 new songs, written but never set to music, were filed away and forgotten. In 2014, Dylan handed them over to producer T-Bone Burnett, who assembled an ensemble of extremely able musicians to interpret Dylan's lyrics. The band became *The New Basement Tapes* and in 2015 released the album *Lost on the River*. After hearing the songs, then watching the film of their collaboration, I felt exhilarated and jealous at the same time. I admired the energy, synchronicity, spontaneity and excitement that comes from working with others. The exploration of the unfamiliar, shared with other curious souls.

When I first heard *The New Basement Tapes*, I had no way of knowing that *Lost on the River* would become the sound track for two major printmaking collaborations, with two different groups of people, on two different continents.

Liminal Terrain was slated for exhibition early in its inception, through a competition sponsored by Akua Color. The deadlines, format, juror/curators and fellow

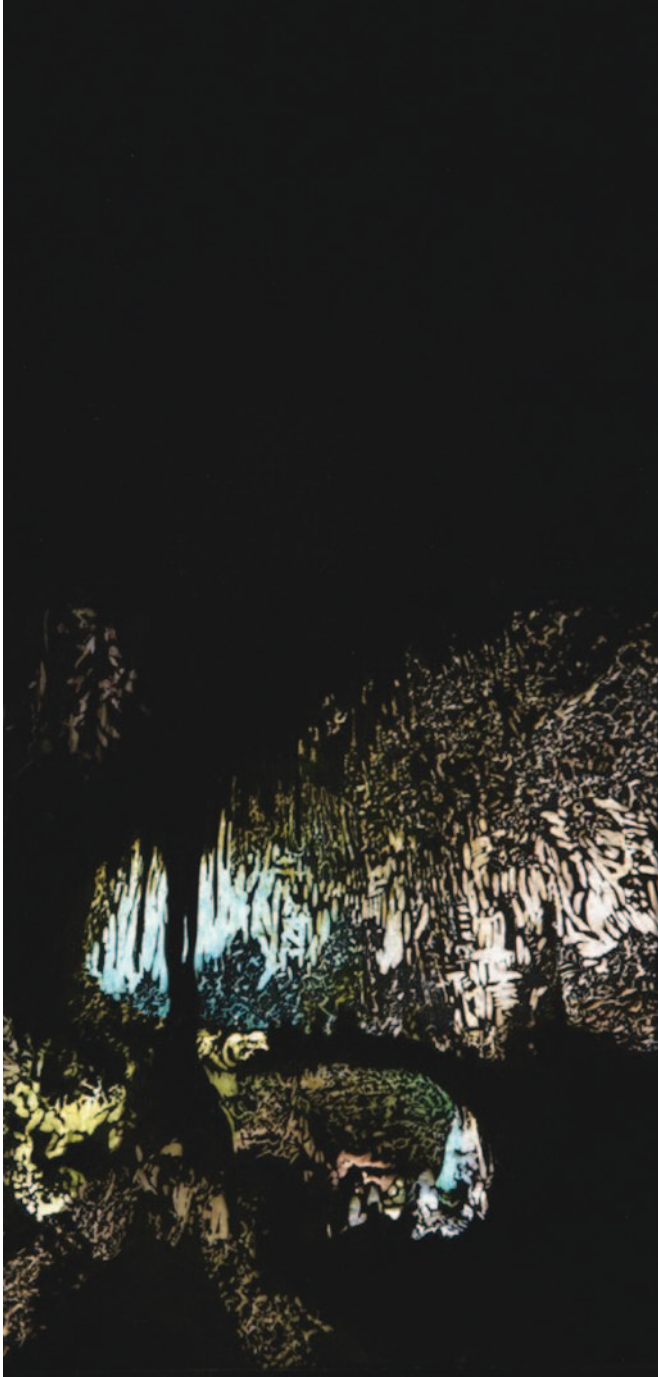
exhibitors added to the process, becoming significant players in the project.

This collaboration was born of necessity. When I left Carlsbad Caverns I wanted to create a series of lighted vignettes surrounded by pitch-blackness. I knew that digital photographs would be involved, overprinted with linoleum cut relief prints. I knew that the piece would involve a number of independent panels, somehow visually connected. I suspected I would be calling on a raft of people to help me bring the piece to fruition.

By chance I saw a call for entries for an interesting exhibition in New York called *Then and Now*, and applied for it. Juror Maddy Rosenberg of Central Booking Art Space accepted my proposal, and the project suddenly became real. It was April, and the exhibition was slated for October.

Akua Color was sponsoring the exhibition, therefore the piece had to be made with Akua Inks. I had to find compatibility between large-scale digital prints, papers, linoleum carvings, Akua inks, an unorthodox installation system and a safe, affordable way to ship the work to New York.

I was to be the conductor of this orchestra. I rallied my players. My first call was to Jonathon Wolf, Photoshop ace with a high quality, large-scale Epson printer. Jonathon and I worked together to transform 15 of my Carlsbad Caverns photos into 5 separate, composited images. I then consulted with the folks at Hiromi Paper in Santa Monica, to choose the right paper for the job. Eduardo Gil de Montes from the Monterey Peninsula College Graphic Arts program, printed small prototypes on all of the various papers.



Liminal Terrain—detail, linoleum cut over digital print

Settling on Asuka paper, the project picked up steam. It was time to begin carving the linoleum blocks. Still unsure of the size and scale of each panel, I knew that each image must be surrounded by utter blackness, and that each printed block would serve to light the darkness. Listening to *Lost on the River* as I carved, I often felt that I was lost in the darkness of the caves, methodically carving my way to the light. Akua inks and large rolls of paper arrived, and still I carved. I tried not to obsess about the unresolved format of the piece, yet I found myself continuously consulting with fellow artists on the subject. Halfway through carving the fourth panel, I took the other three out of the drawer and placed them randomly on my worktable. Within seconds, the format

unexpectedly came together. The panels connected in a way that was the visualization of what I had felt in the cave, but had not been able to articulate nor set a solid path to find. By staying open to possibilities and experiencing the expertise of others, the work reached a place beyond me. Through my unwitting guidance the piece had appeared, but I could never have consciously designed such an arrangement. That the panels connected and flowed together so beautifully, in such powerful concert, was spectacularly moving. The moment connected me to my own creative process, and to the power of a mixed media collaboration.

Invigorated and on a path, I went to Brooklyn for a workshop with Susan Rostrow, the creator of Akua Color. The workshop was part of my competition award, and I was so ready for it! There I met two other exhibition participants, gleaned knowledge from Susan, and worked closely with Christina Pumo, who proved to be invaluable in completing *Liminal Terrain*. Together, Christina and I ran through many permutations and possibilities, eventually finalizing many technical details. Christina taught me the specifics of using Akua for relief printing, helped me devise a registration system and set the perfect press pressure. When I returned home to Blue Mouse Studios in Aptos, I was ready to print the pieces.

Jonathon Wolf printed the digital files. They were gorgeous, bright spots of light surrounded by complete darkness. For a moment I was unsure if I could improve upon them by the addition of my carving. Encouragement from Eva Bernstein, the first violin in my orchestra, helped me to get over my trepidation. Together, Eva and I devised a smooth printing system that involved running each panel through the press twice, once for the lino to be printed over the digital image, and again to monotype solid black around the image. Each pass through the press took my breath away as I reveled in the beauty of the images and the shared experience of realizing them.

Once printed, I had one more terrifying hurdle to surmount: cutting the large panels down to their specific sizes and shapes. I enlisted the help of Beth Truso, as I knew her particular brand of perfectionism would be a foil to my usual “let’s see what happens” attitude. While singing along to *Lost on the River*, the cut pieces slipped into place, and an installation system was devised. Eva was called in to wrap and ship, and *Liminal Terrain* was entrusted to Christina to unpack and install at Central Booking Art Space.

What seemed like moments after *Liminal Terrain* was shipped off to New York, I shipped off to a very different kind of project—an artistic collaboration with my friend Isa Moe in the North of Iceland.



Robynn Smith and Isa Moe jump for joy in Olafsfjordur, Iceland

Deanna Ng

Ten Steps

Friend and traveling companion Isa and I had traveled to Iceland together twice before, as equestrians. This time, we were going as artists, having been granted a collaborative residency at Listhus, in Olafsfjordur, Iceland, on the basis of our proposed project entitled *Ten Steps*. This refers to the exquisite beauty of Iceland, and the fact that Isa and I are unable to walk ten steps or drive ten feet in Iceland without being compelled to take a picture.

With *The New Basement Tapes* blasting, we drove the circumference of Iceland, shooting photographs and videos, collecting data and filling ourselves with ideas. Iceland overtook us. The mists, the wind, the endless wet. Weather became a crucial element in our project. With the light changing constantly, sites were obscured and unveiled in turn. Driving one kilometer became a huge ordeal, as we could not set our cameras down. Shots were directed by both of us, cameras were shared. There was no ownership. We documented it all, from tiny wildflowers to vast ocean surges, enormous herds of white sheep and small bands of multicolored, shaggy horses, bracing themselves against the ever-present winds. At night we took time to look over our shots, and we were struck by the variations in our perspective. We seemed to fill in the blanks for each other. We saw the days' travels anew through our two pairs of eyes.

There is something overwhelming about the beauty.
The depth of it. The endlessness. My eyes flit from exquisite
moment to exquisite moment.
I breathe deeply as my whole body opens to accept the beauty.
My eyes are not enough.

Robynn Smith, Iceland Journal 2015

Once at Listhus, we settled into a fully collaborative working environment. We took daily field trips, continuing our photo safaris. Our small, shared studio became a hotbed of activity as we sorted through our photographs, carved linoleum blocks, made digital and hand drawn transparencies, exposed relief and intaglio solar plates to the fickle, autumn sunlight, developed and hand printed proofs. With no responsibilities and no set schedule, we tore into the work, sleeping little, eating only to fuel up. Our shared studio



Solarplate etching by Robynn Smith, Isa Moe and Arthur Lochridge



Solarplate etching by Robynn Smith and Isa Moe

rhythms increased our ability to problem solve, and encouraged new ideas.

There's only one thing that lurks in my mind
It's nothing here, nothing I've left behind
There's something up front, something I hope to find
I'm gonna set sail again tonight
Round the horn and in the clear moonlight

Bob Dylan with *The New Basement Tapes*

The energy that emanated from our studio attracted others at the residency, and our collaboration soon expanded to include an international cast of characters. Nicolaj Wamberg, a Danish musician, wrote and performed the soundtrack for two short *Ten Steps* videos, while Constanza Gazmuri of Chile lent her film editing expertise. Deanna Ng, Singaporean photographer, made her first solar plate prints in our studio, and Irish writer Margaret O'Toole is helping me with this article.

Robynn Smith and I made our first trip to Iceland five years ago and were awed by the stunning beauty of the land and sky, the passion of the Icelandic horses and the rhythm in which the people, we have since come to know and love, live. Returning together this past October on our fourth journey there, our horizons expanded dramatically with opportunity to share an extended period of driving around the island in this place of terrific power where the elements and the force of nature govern daily life. We found, once again, that we could barely go forward ten steps without the need to capture another image, moving or still. Each corner turned blossomed into a new discovery that we simply could not ignore. In Iceland, we found we could create a new language together through our work as artists with a mutual appreciation for a landscape and culture that we hold deeply in our hearts.

Isa Moe, *Ten Steps*

The *Ten Steps* collaboration continued upon our return to the States. Isa and I are now printing the 30 plus plates we made in Iceland. We are combining plates and using our photographs in a number of new projects. My printmaking students at Monterey Peninsula College are joining in, as I lent every student a plate or two when I got back. I'm enjoying their interpretations of the imagery, and introducing them to the power of collaboration. I am still listening to *The New Basement Tapes*.

A note from student Arthur Lochridge...

Our class assignment was to print Robynn and Isa's solar plates that they had created in Iceland. Each student printed and exchanged plates with others, and overprinted onto prints we had previously made. We then presented our prints and compared with others. It was amazing to see the variation and experience the excitement of all our classmates.

Two weeks after I returned from Iceland, I attended the closing reception for *Liminal Terrain* at Central Booking Art Space in New York City. Fresh from *Ten Steps*, I marveled at the differences in the two collaborative projects. *Liminal Terrain* was made with the help of many people and the wonders of mixed media. Like the Dylan songs handed off to T-Bone Burnett, the quality and depth of the project was vastly improved as a response to working with others, but the project and the vision were essentially mine. The collaboration that took place in Iceland was very different. It was and continues to be about fearless partnership and the merging of vision. Both projects have much to say about the exponential increase of knowledge and creativity that is possible in a collaborative environment. We think of artists as having strong, singular egos, but letting go of the ego in favor of shared experience, can open vast floodgates to creativity while embracing the unknown.

When Printmaking Collaborates

By AV Pike

At the conclusion of a MPC printmaking workshop on Collaboration, the statement was made that Printmaking, by its very nature, is a collaborative media. In simplest terms, it plays well with others. As an artist whose work is totally immersed in process, I completely embrace that premise. Now, you might be one of those that believe that only people can collaborate—and that inanimate things, such as printmaking, cannot. Choose a different word you would advise—use terms like partner, team up with, have a relationship with, connect with, or mix or mingle or marry. Well, yes, those are all good words and we use them every day to describe all manner of relationships, both human and otherwise. And, notably, the word “collaborate” is happily nestled right beside those same words in every thesaurus. So why then should collaboration—and only collaboration—be off-limits when it comes to discussing printmaking? It’s not like we’re talking rocket science here—the word comes directly from the Latin *collaborare*, meaning, “to work together.” In common usage it simply indicates working jointly to produce or create something.

In printmaking, separate processes often share their individuality and uniqueness to such a degree that both of the participating processes are changed. Therefore, the end product is a unique hybrid, even if some individual characteristics (artistic DNA, if you will) remain apparent. I’d call that result a collaboration—a relationship fundamentally deeper and different from a surface-level connection, amalgamation, partnership, application or marriage of convenience between processes.

For instance, printmaking has partnered, connected, used—and yes, collaborated—with photography ever since the latter medium was invented. The photogravure is itself a hybrid of the two media. Both

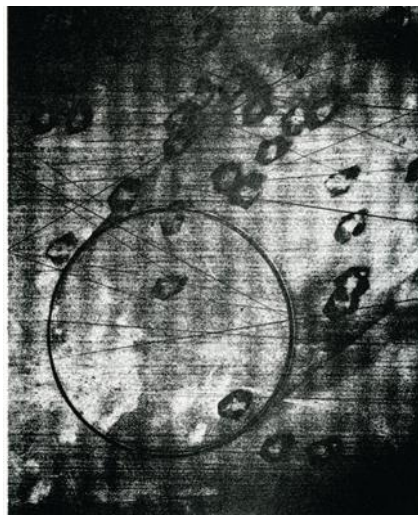
photography and printmaking are essential for creating a photogravure. Film, chemistry and light come from the photography side; the etched plate, ink and press from the printmaking side. It’s an ongoing bond that has been evolving for over a century. In recent years efforts by Magnolia Editions and Dan Weldon have further morphed the gravure process by merging digital transparencies (Magnolia) and photo-polymer plates (Weldon) into the workflow.

My own art almost always employs multiple processes. Typically, one of my finished pieces might well draw upon collagraphs, 19th century cyanotype chemistry, 20th century darkroom negatives, 21st century digital negatives, and photo-polymer plates along its path to completion. These individual processes are inextricably bound together in the finished image. Each process interacts chemically or physically (or both) with all the others, and altering the sequence in which they are introduced into the process markedly affects the final result. Along the way, each medium both gives, and gives up, some qualities by which it is separately defined. The resulting art pushes the boundaries and borders of each. I call that collaboration.

After reading these articles in which the term collaboration is used to describe process, I’ve gained insights into the nature of printmaking, and a better understanding of my own work as well. I hope that all the articles in this year’s journal will also expand your definition of collaboration. So yes, I do think we should allow—and perhaps even (gasp!) encourage—using “collaboration” in describing the way printmaking actually unfolds in our studios. After all, it’s our Art, and we get to make the rules!



Solar plate from analog photogram negative



Proto plate print from digitally altered file



Detail of cyanotype with screen print image



Lining up the second plate over the first print

Sharon King

Combining Methods: Bob Rocco & Signblast Tape Stencil Relief Printing

By Sharon King

On several crisp mornings this past fall I visited Bob Rocco at the Tannery Arts Center in Santa Cruz. My mission: to explore his unique process using signblast tape stencils for printing.

The Tannery is a collaboration between the City of Santa Cruz, Artspace Projects (a non-profit developer of affordable space for artists and art organizations), and the art center itself, also a non-profit organization. Here artists live, work, show, perform and educate. Tucked within this modern, eucalyptus-ringed utopia is PATT, Printmakers at the Tannery, of which Bob Rocco is a founding member and President. Here 20 artists create silkscreen, etching, collagraph, monotype, chine collé, photopolymer etching, photogravure, linocuts, and woodcut, in any combination. "Six years ago the space was a dirt floor with cobwebs, rats and falling timbers. After Artspace rebuilt it, we had a cement floor and bare plywood walls and a heating vent. We had multiple work parties to seal the floors, build the furniture, gallery and storage, put in electricity, plumbing and lights." Bob explains further, "We have had at least ten internal workshops to teach each other about areas of printmaking we know well. We have broken down the workload of running the co-op into twenty separate jobs that we each have responsibility for. We have done joint venture art projects in the community and have worked with the Tannery on many educational projects.

Working with other people in a printmaking co-op has been inspiring, not only for the professional support and camaraderie but also as a springboard for new ideas, since everyone's approach to the process is different."

I was curious to know how Bob's printmaking collaborates between alternative methods. "I've done them all," he told me. "I can easily move from one process to another."

Bob's professional background exemplifies his multifaceted mind. Born in Rhode Island, Rocco holds degrees in psychology, chemistry, medicine, and art.

I get bored easily, and move from tool to tool. The real impetus of a new discovery is that I spend so much time involved in the process of 'how to do it' that it becomes a distraction for me. I don't have to worry about the outcome. I think a large barrier to production is the fear of screwing up, so I delve into the process. I get more enjoyment doing the stuff than finishing it. Occasionally I like the result and am able to show it—the rest of the time, it's a learning experience. I discover what not to do, and commonly that gives me an idea for a new direction.

With that in mind, Bob might find himself in Home Depot, looking for new materials to add to his repertoire. "I'm trying to figure out what they have and then figure

out what I'm going to do with it. My particular interest is in experimental methods, wherein I try to express my particular feeling about the subject, translating it to a specific time and place."

I asked him how he defines the discipline he brings to his work. "I think focus and determination are just there. Other people may inspire and encourage, but you must have that urge to get into it deeply and finish what you started. I'm the same teaching, working on cars, doing home repair or learning about something new."

In order to understand the process better, I spent several hours at the Tannery working with this innovative process and making note of what I would need to have on hand when I struck out on my own. Here is some of what I learned:

Signblast tape is a stencil material normally used for printing signs or sandblasting letters into stone. Bob realized that it can adhere to plexiglass and be carved with linocut tools. "The advantage of this material is that it is inexpensive and cuts with scissors. The plexi you can score and snap as well. The signblast adhered to the plexi is most often used for the second and third relief plates. The great thing about this is you can see through each plate." Negative space becomes transparent as the tape is carved away from the clear plexiglass. Each block produced can transfer a different color to the surface, often including a base of traditional woodblock.

Bob starts with a two or three-toned thumbnail. "Since I'm working with the interaction of colors," he says, "I choose shapes that superimpose, not exclude each other."

He uses Denril, a vellum drafting film, for drawing. It can be rubbed onto the surface of the signblast tape. "Use the tool of your choice to burnish the image onto the tape, such as a barren, or a flat wooden spoon."

Bob uses Anchor Continental formula III Signblast tape #111 (0.043 inches thick) which can be purchased by the foot from Dick Blick or Pacific Coast Sign in Portland, Oregon by the roll.

How to

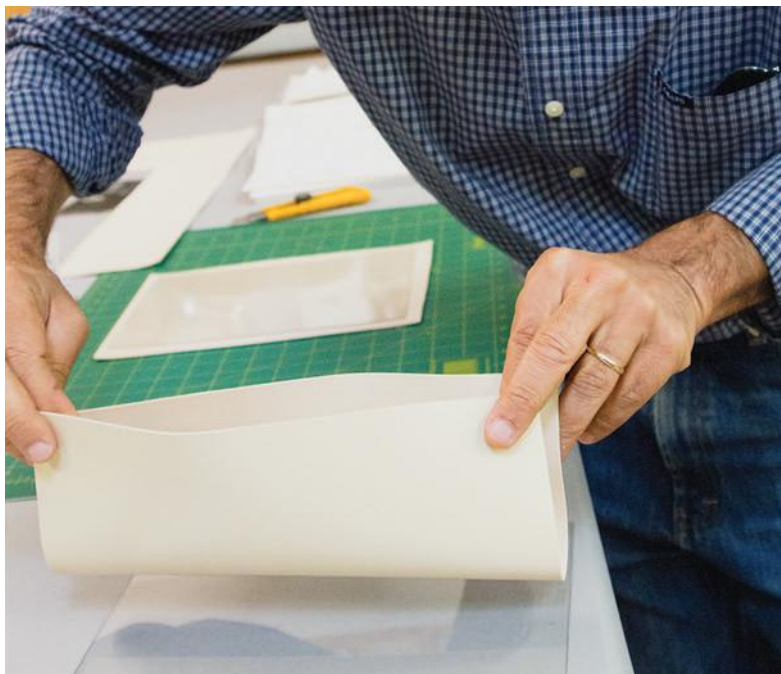
To mount the tape on plexiglass first degrease it with alcohol. Don't get fingerprints on the tape or the plexiglass. Cut the tape oversize, peel off the backing one half of the way, and center the middle of the tape on the middle of the plate. Brayer the tape onto the plate starting from the center out. Watch the underside. If it bubbles, lift a corner and brayer again. Flip over the plexiglass and trim the edges with a mat knife. Carbon paper leaves heavy marks if you rest your hand against it. The tape accepts transfer methods such as toner with blender marker or Wintergreen oil.

Laying down the folded signblast tape, starting in the center of the plexi plate

S. King



Signblast and woodcut plates used for portrait print with finished print





The 3 plates, one wood, two signblast, used for the print S.King



Checking registration of all three plates together

S.King

To cut the tape, follow the edges of large shapes with an X-Acto or wide V-gouge. Make sure all edges are sloping away from the shape, not straight up and down. Peel out the negative shapes. For small shapes, gently hold in place with a scribe and touch the edge with superglue. Carving within shapes is easy, but if you are near the edge of the plate, start carving from the outside in.

Bob's Materials List

An image the size of your plate, along with its mirror image (or have it on tracing paper).

- Signblast tape
- X-Acto knife and blades
- Carbon paper
- Tracing paper
- Lino or woodcut tools
- Superglue
- Alcohol
- Paper towels
- Relief oil
- Woodblock paper, i.e. lightweight Rives or kozo
- Baren
- Scissors
- Dry erase markers, 3 values or 3 colors
- Tweezers
- Notebook
- Scribe
- Baby wipe or equivalent
- Gloves, ink, ink knives, brayers, ink modifiers, Pam, veg oil, apron, pencil,
- Enthusiasm 'required'

Bob has generously shared his email address so that you might ask him for advice at the point I wandered off course. If you are in Santa Cruz, stop by the Tannery and take a look at the strong and successful collaborative PAT'T (Printmakers at the Tannery). Happy Printing!

Email Robert Rocco at: bobroccoart@gmail.com

Close Encounters of the Collaborative Kind

By Ted Orland



Some years ago I collaborated with my friend David Bayles in writing a small book we self-published under the title *Art & Fear*. That collaboration was our way of exploring how art gets made, why it often doesn't get made, and the reasons so many artists drop out along the way.

Describing exactly how that collaboration worked, however, is a trickier proposition. The literal answer would probably be *slowly*, given that it took us seven years to complete a finished manuscript. Viewed from the inside, however, that felt like an entirely natural pace. Having already been friends for a bunch of years made for a genuinely enjoyable collaboration, one in which writing proved the perfect tool for clarifying issues we often grappled with in friendly conversation. (Indeed, lively dinners with a carafe of red wine nearby were an essential part of the equation.)

We settled into a productive work pattern, after a little fumbling, by each tackling the topics that most intrigued us, shuttling revised versions back and forth until we reached a consensus. Some topics morphed into chapter-length essays almost instantly; others stubbornly hunkered down as half-finished paragraphs for months on end. Since artists rarely discuss these things, however, I really don't know how closely our particular mix of conviction, curiosity and the willingness to concede a point resembles other such efforts.

As a business venture *Art & Fear* was hopelessly naïve, but as an artistic collaboration it made all the sense in the world. We learned important things about ourselves, about art, and about the common ground we share with other artists. By the time our conversations finally coalesced into a manuscript, we had *already* reaped the benefits of our effort. Viewed from any reasonable distance, it was a textbook example of artistic collaboration, yielding results that never could have been achieved by either of us working alone.

Simply put, *Art & Fear* was written by artists, for artists. In my case, photography became my choice of medium early on, after I enrolled (on a lark) in a two-week summer photography workshop led by Ansel Adams in Yosemite. Seemed harmless enough. Changed my life. It also made Adams my first and only formal photography teacher, with the un-surprising result that my early photographs were all, well, highly Adamsonian. The image that opens this article, *Clearing Winter Storm, Yosemite Valley, 1970* is a pretty accurate baseline illustration of my starting point in photography.

But even as I created ever-more-perfect (and, alas, perfectly predictable) images, I developed the disconcerting feeling that I wasn't producing new art, so much as I was re-producing the history of art. The large-format sharp-focus B&W natural landscape had become a template that rewarded mastery, but left little room for discovery. Case in point: virtually all art photography at that time remained stodgily black and white, even as etching and painting and the other visual arts were awash in glorious bright subtle rich pastel blazing electric color! Something needed to change.

For me, escaping photography's self-imposed boundaries involved reaching back in time to find common ground with painters and alchemists of the past. In *One-and-a-Half Domes*, I chemically toned the distant mountains to match the sepia browns of 19th century photographs, while retaining the cold tones of contemporary prints in the foreground. Then I applied artists' oils to the tourist sign, making it more prominent than the entire Sierra Nevada range. And lastly, looming over everything, a trash can mimicking the shape of Half Dome. Basically the finished piece was my run at encompassing the entire history of Yosemite in a single frame.

One-and-a-Half Domes

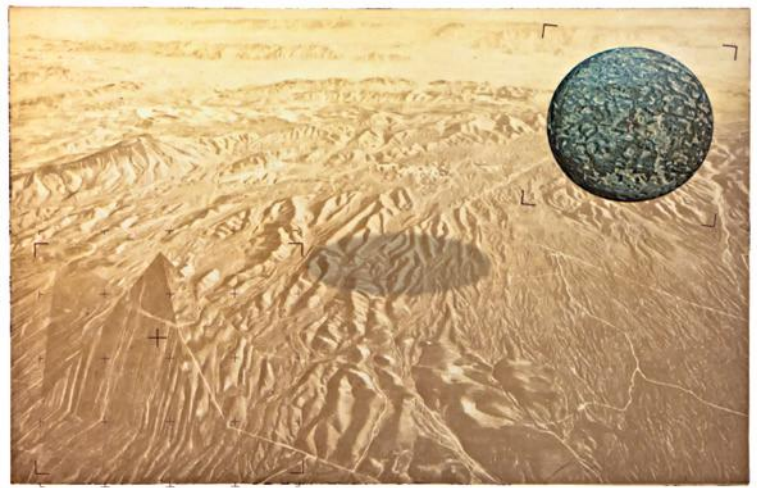




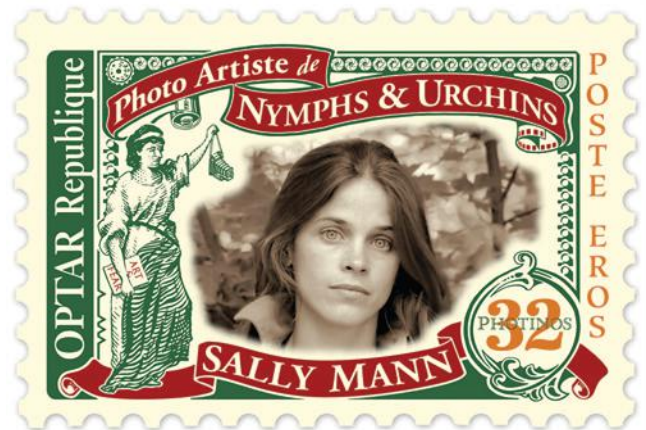
The Bird

That example is drawn from decades ago, but it remains typical of my working approach: take a compass bearing on a distant idea, set sail that direction, and make mid-course corrections as needed along the way. Now fast-forward to 2012, when I traded my photographer's cap for a student ID card at Monterey Peninsula College. I enrolled in a Beginning Printmaking course taught by Robynn Smith, herself a legendary figure in the printmaking community.

I already knew, going in, that the gulf separating printmaking from traditional photography is large enough that any integration of those two media would be a challenge for me. Still, even my clumsy first efforts with solar plate intaglio convinced me that there were wonderful possibilities on the printmaking side of that divide. That sense was only heightened from watching fellow students experimenting with other etching techniques. As a photographer I was especially envious of the exquisite line-work achieved via the etching process. I wanted that line-work in *my* prints!



Pyramid & Satellite



Commemorative Postage Stamp

The tools and processes and even the mental approach to printmaking felt alien to me at first. In my (ahem) Photographic Studio, I can sit alone at my desk, cup of coffee in hand, cat on my lap, and make a print by typing Command-P on a keyboard. *Surprise!* It doesn't work that way in printmaking. Printmaking is hands-on all the way. Printmakers rejoice (and rightly so) that the hand of the artist is so clearly evident in every piece of art they produce. So, for instance, dense etching inks pressed into thick art papers yield prints with a richness and depth that inkjet printers can't come close to matching. Any image reproduced in both media will reveal how radically the tones differ between a print created via an inkjet printer and one that emerged from an etching press.

As for color, I had ceased oil-coloring my photographs after converting from gelatin-silver to inkjet technology back around 2001, since the coated papers required for inkjet printing don't interact well with oil paints. Discovering that different oil colors could be applied *à la poupée* to printing plates (as in *The Bird*) re-opened all those doors. I was equally impressed by the bold solid colors in artwork emerging from the silkscreen class working next door.

Rather than jumping ship entirely and converting from photography to printmaking, however, I looked for ways to combine the best qualities of both. My first effort was, if nothing else, direct. In *Pyramid & Satellite*, I first printed a solar plate intaglio of a mythical landscape; then, using an inkjet printer, I overprinted an equally mythical computer-generated moon directly on top of the intaglio image. The result seemed interesting enough visually, but artistically it felt a bit like a shotgun wedding.

So as I slowly gained control of the subtleties of printmaking, my efforts shifted progressively toward retaining the *flavor* of those printmaking qualities, even as I printed them via my inkjet printer. In *Commemorative Postage Stamp*, I used broad flat blocks of color typical of screenprinting. In *Burnt Palms*, I took an otherwise mundane color photograph, sharpened everything, simplified the composition and tempered the colors until the resulting image carried the impression of being a Plate from an Audubon folio of natural history illustrations.

Adding printmaking sensibilities to my artistic toolbox had the larger effect of increasing my artistic range as

a photographer. (I like having lots of options—it's no fun being a one-trick pony.) Over time I've become more assured in reaching for those tools, and especially in embedding multiple photographic and printmaking elements into the same art piece.

The Best General View From the Coulterville Trail, for instance, began its artistic life as a straight digital color photograph of a strangely sparse and open forest that I came upon one day while driving to Yosemite. Its unusual appearance resulted from a forest fire having swept through years' earlier, greatly thinning its ranks. It also eerily resembled the way forests were rendered in pre-photographic times, with each tree drawn separately and individually, conferring a certain stately order upon the unruly wilderness. At least that was my initial reaction to the scene, but it was enough to get me thinking about how I might capture all that in a finished piece.

I began by creating a fine black line around each individual forest detail, creating the effect of a steel-line engraving. (Thank you, *Photoshop*!) Then I muted and skewed the colors in the scene until they felt reminiscent of the colors commonly seen in nineteenth century lithographs. When I sensed the picture was beginning



Burnt Palms



BEST GENERAL VIEW FROM THE COULTERVILLE ROAD 12 MI. FROM YOSEMITE VALLEY MARIPOSA COUNTY, CAL.

The Best General View From the Coulterville Trail

to resemble an early *Currier & Ives* print, I decided to run with that idea. I surrounded the image with a thin frame line and added a faintly ornate title (in a style often seen in landscape prints and stereo cards of the Victorian era.) As a final touch I added a faded yellow paper tone to the area surrounding the image, and debossed the area inside that perimeter to leave a physical impression matching that of an actual engraving plate. When you view the finished piece, *The Best General View*, is not a photograph, exactly, nor is it a printed plate, exactly. It is a collaboration.

The physical description of that art piece, however, only touches the surface of what has gone into it. Equally but intangibly factoring into that piece, in overlapping fashion, are several years I spent working as a graphic designer, several more as Ansel Adams' Assistant, three decades teaching art, a half-century photographing the landscapes of the West, authoring the history book *Man & Yosemite*, and (by chance or fate) having fifteen years earlier photographed the very forest fire that brought that strange landscape into existence.

All that's just to say that, at least by my accounting, every piece of art is a form of artistic collaboration—a two-way conversation between you and your tools, your materials, your audience, your experiences, and most assuredly between you and your own dreams and memories. Simply put, *everything* matters. Any single work of art you make is imbued with some trace of all your preceding experiences. The undeniable fact is that your art is not some residue left when you subtract all the things you haven't done—it is the full payoff for all the things you *have* done.

THE CALIFORNIA PRINTMAKER

THE JOURNAL OF THE CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF PRINTMAKERS 2016

New Members

Portfolio Review Summer 2015

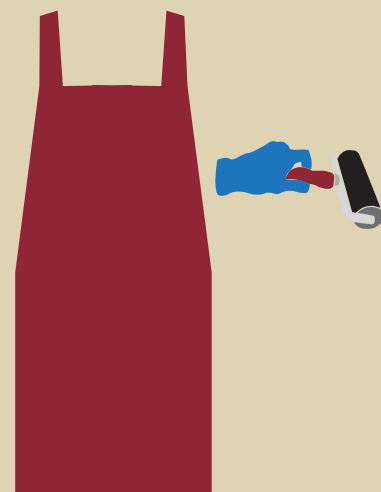
Shunsuke Ando
Erica Barajas
Jan Cook
Cathie Crawford
Rosemarie Gebhart
Kathryn Greenwald
Rachell Hester
Sharon King
Mary V. Marsh
Golbanou Moghaddas
Adrienne Momi
Elisabeth Nicula
Nora Partido
Rajit Phiosuwan
Jon Shannon Rogers
Skye Schirmer
Masha Schweitzer
Susan Silvester
David Smith
Jami Taback
Jennifer Tancreto
Yishu Wang
Sarah Whorf
Monica Wiesblott
Everett Wilson

Portfolio Review Fall 2015

Barbara Furbush
Elizabeth Paganelli
Jen Cole
Laurie Szujewska
Lola Fraknoi
Ellen Markoff
Melody Overstreet
Monique Wales

2015 CSP Board of Directors

President	Luz Marina Ruiz
Vice President	Monica Farrar
Treasurer	Maryly Snow
Secretary	Hélène Côté
Membership	Rozanne Hermelyn Di Silvestro
Residencies	Jonathan Barcan
Portfolio Review	Carrie Ann Plank
Publicity	Michelle Wilson
Publications	Susan Howe
Publications	AV Pike
Publications	Ginger Tolonen
Webmaster	Vicky Mei Chen
At Large	Peter Baczek
At Large/Exhibitions	Joanna Kidd
At Large/Exhibitions	Gustavo Mora



Printing by Magcloud

©2016 The California Society of Printmakers.

All Rights reserved. Copyrights of all images remain with the artists unless otherwise stated.